

ANTH 390—Issues in Anthropology Fall 2008

MW 3:00-4:15 PM, Fitzelle 318
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COURSE DESCRIPTION

What does it mean to be human? Are there human universals? How is behavior fashioned by nature and nurture? Is a unified discipline of anthropology possible? This seminar will assist students in answering basic questions about the nature of the human experience by considering practical and theoretical issues of interest to anthropologists and others. Students will discuss general questions in cultural anthropology, archaeology, and biological anthropology, as well as examine anthropological perspectives on current events. Guest lectures, film, readings, and discussion will form the basis of the seminar. Significant writing assignments are required. Prerequisite: Junior or Senior standing *and* two of ANTH 100, ANTH 130, ANTH 140. General Education Attribute: WS2.

This is a seminar course designed for juniors and seniors which meets the capstone requirement for the anthropology major. The course focuses on discussion of various issues and debates in and between the subfields of anthropology. Classes consist entirely of presentations and discussions. Other departmental faculty will be frequent guests to the course, bringing in their own insights and information on various topics.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Attendance will be taken each class because participation is a major part of your grade (see below), and you have to be in class to participate. I will excuse absences in the event of illness or family/personal problems, with appropriate documentation.

REQUIRED READINGS

There is no text to purchase. All required readings and supplements are available on the course's Angel site (along with copies of all other course materials). The majority of these are documents in PDF format, which you will need Adobe Reader to open (free at Adobe's website).

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

You are expected to be familiar with the rules concerning academic dishonesty as published in the Code of Student Conduct (<http://www.oneonta.edu/development/judicial/code.asp#conduct>). In particular, note the possible penalties for academic dishonesty: "A Student deemed guilty of an act of academic dishonesty may, depending on the nature of the offense, be subject to one or more of the following measures: failure of the assignment or examination, failure of the course, or dismissal from the College."

Please note that it is my policy in cases of academic dishonesty to fail someone *for the entire course* and to forward the case to the Office of Student Development for possible further action.

GRADING

Your final grade will be based on oral presentations of readings, reaction papers, and class

participation, for a total of 300 points, broken down as follows:

	Points (each)	Points (total)
2 Oral presentations	50	100
4 Reaction papers	20	80
1 Paper on holism in anthropology	20	20
Attendance/participation	100	100
Total		300

Your grade for the course will be determined from the total number of points that you earn, using the following table:

280–300 points = A	240–249 points = B-	200–209 points = D+
270–279 points = A-	230–239 points = C+	190–199 points = D
260–269 points = B+	220–229 points = C	180–189 points = D-
250–259 points = B	210–219 points = C-	0–179 points = E

Oral presentations:

Each class meeting will focus on the assigned issue of the day (see below for the schedule of issues). Each issue will be summarized by one student. Each student in the class will have two turns during the semester to summarize an issue. I will ask for volunteers for a given day at least one week in advance. If no one volunteers, I will assign the topics.

The expectations for each class meeting are as follows:

Student presenter: Your oral presentation should be roughly 10 minutes in length and focus on the main points of the issue, including history of the issue and current status, both pro and con. You will then give your own conclusions regarding the issue in question, and then pose questions for the rest of the class to consider. Your presentation should *not* consist of simply a review of the readings—you are expected to provide a summary of the broader topic. You will find it useful to read *beyond* the assigned readings.

Other students: You are expected to read the assigned readings for the day and to participate in the discussion. If you do not volunteer, I will call on you.

Each oral presentation is worth 50 points, such that the two oral summaries collectively count for a third of your grade in the course. Each oral summary is graded as follows: Excellent = 50 points, Very good = 45 points, Good = 40 points, Fair = 35 points, Poor = 30 or fewer points.

Reaction papers:

Each student in the class will write *four* reaction papers on issues during the course. Due dates for these reaction papers are September 22, October 13, November 3, and December 8. For each of these reaction papers, you are to choose one of the topics that had been covered in the past several classes (see the course schedule below for a detailed list of what topics are permissible

for each of the reaction papers). *The only restriction is that you cannot write a paper on the same topic that you had presented for an oral summary.*

Each reaction paper should be approximately 4–5 pages in length, double-spaced. The reaction paper should identify the history and nature of the issue/debate, identify arguments pro and con, and end with your conclusion. The reaction papers should include material from both the readings for the given issue as well as any class discussion that took place. You can also incorporate additional readings that you have found on your own; this is a good way to earn a higher grade (be sure to include such sources as a bibliography in your paper).

The papers also should be treated as “cumulative” in the sense that the papers will build upon each other – i.e., material in the first paper should be considered further in the second paper, and the final holism paper will draw from material all previous papers.

Each reaction paper is worth 20 points. Papers will be graded on comprehension, clarity, original thought, and style (including spelling and grammar). I expect improvement over time, such that each successive reaction paper will be held to increasingly higher standards. Each reaction paper is graded as follows: Excellent = 20 points, Very good = 18 points, Good = 16 points, Fair = 14 points, Poor = 12 or fewer points. *The first three papers can be rewritten and resubmitted for a higher grade.*

Note: 5 points will be deducted for late papers. You do *not* get these points back even if you revise and resubmit the paper.

Paper on holism in anthropology:

You must submit a written response (approximately 4–5 pages in length, double-spaced) on December 15 to the following question:

What has the word holism meant in anthropology, and has it been a useful concept? Consider different versions of and applications of holism, whether they have been equally successful, and evaluate whether anthropologists succeed in being holistic (and in what sense). Give specific examples using information from this course, other courses, and/or your own readings (giving appropriate citations).

If you wish, you can submit a draft on December 1 and you will have the chance to submit a revised version. This paper will be graded using the same scale as for the reaction papers.

Participation:

Because this is a seminar style course, participation is *critical*. Your level of participation and attendance determines one third of your grade in the course. You are expected to have completed and understood the readings for each class (even if you are not presenting), come prepared for discussion, and actively participate in discussion. If you remain silent I *will* call on you, so you are better off jumping into the discussion at a time of your choosing!

Participation will be graded based on attendance and on comprehension, clarity of discussion, original thought, and enthusiasm in discussions. Discussion is expected to remain civil at all times, no matter how much you might disagree with someone else. My judgment of your overall record of attendance and participation will be converted to grade form as follows: Excellent = 100 points, Very good = 90 points, Good = 80 points, Fair = 70 points, Poor = 60 or fewer points.

Course Schedule and Readings:

Wed. Aug 27 Introduction

Mon. Sept 1 Holism I [Guest: Don Hill]

Lowie, Robert H.

1940 "The Proper View of Cultural Elements," in *An Introduction to Cultural Anthropology*, pp. 384-390. New York: Rinehart & Co.

Redfield, Robert

1955 (Selection from) "Whole and Parts," in *The Little Community: Viewpoints for the Study of a Human Whole*, pp. 155-168. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wed. Sept 3 Holism II (Jason)

Harris, Marvin

1999 "Holism," in *Theories of Culture in Postmodern Times*, pp. 133-139. Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira Press.

Nanda, Serena and Richard L. Warms

2004 "Culture is an Integrated System—Or is it?," in *Cultural Anthropology*, 8th edition, pp. 47-49. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth/Thomson Learning.

Scupin, Raymond

2006 "Holistic Anthropology, Interdisciplinary Research, and the Global Perspective," in *Cultural Anthropology: A Global Perspective*, 6th edition, pp. 11-14. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

Mon. Sept 8 Where do categories come from? (Katie)

Spaulding, Albert C.

1953 Statistical Techniques for the Discovery of Artifact Types. *American Antiquity* 18(4):305-313.

1954 Reply to Ford. *American Antiquity* 19(4):391-393.

Feleppa, Robert

1986 Emics, Etics, and Social Objectivity. *Current Anthropology* 27(3):243-255.

Wed. Sept 10 Is Emic Relevant? (Amanda)

Hayden, Brian

1984 Are Emic Types Relevant to Archaeology? *Ethnohistory* 31(2):79-92.

Baer, Roberta D. and Marta Bustillo

1993 Susto and Mal de Ojo among Florida Farmworkers: Emic and Etic Perspectives. *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 7(1):90-100.

Mon. Sept 15 What is race? [Guests: John Relethford, Craig Bielert]

Smedley, Audrey

2007 "The History of the Idea of Race...and Why it Matters." Paper presented at the conference "Race, Human Variation and Disease: Consensus and Frontiers," March 14-17, 2007, Warrenton, Virginia.

Templeton, Alan

1998 Human Races: A Genetic and Evolutionary Perspective. *American Anthropologist* 100(3):632-650.

(optional) Relethford, John H.
in press Race and Global Patterns of Phenotypic Variation. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology*.

Wed. Sept 17 **Race in Professional Practice (Jillian) [Guest: Craig Bielert]**

Kaszycka, Katerzyna A. and Jan Strzałko
2003 "Race"—Still an Issue for Physical Anthropology? Results of Polish Studies Seen in the Light of the U.S. Findings. *American Anthropologist* 105(1):116-124.

Duster, Troy
2005 Race and Reification in Science. *Science* 307 (Feb. 18):1050-1051.

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr.
2008 "Is he a racist? James Watson's errant, perilous theories." *Washington Post*, June 11, 2008, p. A17.

Relethford, John
1995 Review of Race, Evolution, and Behavior: A Life History Perspective, by JP Rushton. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 98:91-94.

(optional) Schwartz, John
2007 "DNA Pioneer's Genome Blurs Race Lines." *New York Times*, December 12, 2007, Section A, p. 22.

Mon. Sept 22 **What is culture?**

Sapir, Edward
1924 Culture, Genuine and Spurious. *American Journal of Sociology* 29(4):401-429.

Wolf, Eric R.
1984 Culture: Panacea or Problem? *American Antiquity* 49(2):393-400.

Reaction Paper #1 due.

Choose from topics covered Sept. 1-Sept. 17.

Wed. Sept 24 **What is tradition? (Amber)**

Handler, Richard and Jocelyn Linnekin
1984 Tradition, Genuine or Spurious. *Journal of American Folklore* 97(385):273-290.

Mon. Sept. 29 **Culture: Trash it or Keep it? (Alyssa)**

Trouillot, Michel-Rolph
2003 "Adieu, Culture—A New Duty Arises," in *Global Transformations: Anthropology and the Modern World*, pp. 97-116. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Brumann, Christoph
1999 Writing for Culture: Why a Successful Concept Should Not Be Discarded. *Current Anthropology* 40(Supp.):S1-S27.

Wed. Oct 1 **Too Much Nurture? Freeman vs. Mead on Samoa (Theresa)**

Boas, Franz
1928 "Foreward," in Mead, M., *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization*, pp. xiii-xv. New York: W. Morrow & Co.

Mead, Margaret
1928 "Introduction," in *Coming of Age in Samoa: A Psychological Study of Primitive Youth for Western Civilization*, pp. 1-13. New York: W. Morrow & Co.

Freeman, Derek
1983 "Preface," and "Toward a More Scientific Anthropological Paradigm," in *Margaret Mead and Samoa: The Making and Unmaking of an Anthropological Myth*, pp. xi-xvii, 294-302. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Mon. Oct 6 Nature vs. Nurture: The Status of Women [Guest: Sallie Han]

Ortner, Sherry B.
1974 "Is Female to Male as Nature is to Culture?" In M.Z. Rosaldo and L. Lamphere, eds., *Woman, culture, and society*, pp. 68-87. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Wed. Oct 8 Holism in Bioarchaeology [Guest: Tracy Betsinger]

Larsen C.S.
1997. "Introduction," in *Bioarchaeology*, pp. 1-5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Papathanasiou A.
2005. Health status of the Neolithic population of Alepotrypa Cave, Greece. *American Journal of Physical Anthropology* 126(4):377-390.

Mon. Oct 13 The Symbiotic Relationship Between Dogs and Humans [Guest: Renee Walker]

Morey, Darcy F.
2006 Burying Key Evidence: the Social Bond between Dogs and People. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, Vol 33, pp. 158-175.

Sablin, Mikhail V. and Gennady A. Khlopachev
2002 The Earliest Ice Age Dogs: Evidence from Eliseevichi I. *Current Anthropology*, 43(5):795-798.

Reaction Paper #2 due.
Choose from topics covered Sept. 22–Oct. 8.

Wed. Oct 15 What primates tell us about being human [Guest: Craig Bielert]

TBA

Mon. Oct 20 A Holistic Perspective on Failure: The Norse in Greenland (Katie) [Guest: Cynthia Klink]

McGovern, Thomas H.
1994 "Management for Extinction," In C.L. Crumley, ed., *Historical Ecology: Cultural Knowledge and Changing Landscapes*, pp. 127-154. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

Barlow, L.K., J.P. Sadler, A.E.J. Ogilvie, P.C. Buckland, T. Amorosi, J.H. Inguimundarson, P. Skidmore, A.J. Dugmore, and T.H. McGovern.
1997 Interdisciplinary investigations of the end of the Norse Western Settlement in Greenland. *The Holocene* 7(4):489-499.

Wed. Oct 22 Ancient Maya Male Sexuality (Theresa) [Guest: Cynthia Klink]

Joyce, Rosemary A.
2000 "A Precolumbian gaze: male sexuality among the ancient Maya," In R.A. Schmidt and B.L. Voss, eds., *Archaeologies of Sexuality*, pp. 263-283. New York: Routledge.

Mon. Oct 27 **Holism in Folklore and Ethnomusicology [Guest: Don Hill]**

Hill, Donald R.

2007 "Scholarship and Approaches," in *Caribbean Folklore: A Handbook*, pp. 85-112. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Wed. Oct 29 **What History Reveals About the Nature of Racial and Ethnic Identity**

Haley, Brian D. and Larry R. Wilcoxon

2005 How Spaniards Became Chumash, and Other Tales of Ethnogenesis. *American Anthropologist* 107(3):432-445.

Mon. Nov 3 **Holistic Economics (Jason)**

Spiro, Melford E.

1966 Buddhism and Economic Action in Burma. *American Anthropologist* 68(5):1163-1173.

Bourgois, Philippe

1989 Crack in Spanish Harlem: Culture and Economy in the Inner City. *Anthropology Today* 5(4):6-11.

Reaction Paper #3 due.

Choose from topics covered Oct. 13–Oct. 29.

Wed. Nov 5 **Anti-Holism? Cracks in U.S. Anthropology [Guest: John/Tracy]**

Morell, Virginia

1993 Anthropology: Nature–Culture Battleground. *Science* 261(Sept. 24):1798, 1801-1802.

Smith, Eric Alden

2006 Anthropological Schisms. *Anthropology News* (January):8-11.

Yanagisako, Sylvia and Daniel Segal

2006 Welcoming Debate: Exploring Links and Disconnects Among the Quadrants. *Anthropology News* (January):8-11.

(optional) Gibbons, Ann

1997 Cultural Divide at Stanford. *Science* 276(June 20):1783-1784.

Mon. Nov 10 **Is a simple explanation always the best? The "Clash of Civilizations" thesis (John)**

Huntington, Samuel P.

1993 The Clash of Civilizations? *Foreign Affairs* 72(3):22-30.

Gusterson, Hugh

2005 "The Seven Deadly Sins of Samuel Huntington," In C. Besteman and H. Gusterson, eds., *Why America's Top Pundits are Wrong : Anthropologists Talk Back*, pp. 24-42. Berkeley: University of California Press.

(optional) Brown, Keith

2005 "Samuel Huntington, Meet the Nuer," In C. Besteman and H. Gusterson, eds., *Why America's Top Pundits are Wrong : Anthropologists Talk Back*, pp. 43-59. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Wed. Nov 12 Good vs. Evil: Cultural Relativism (Lauren)

Brown, Michael

2008 Cultural Relativism 2.0. *Current Anthropology* 49(3):363-383.

Mon. Nov 17 Linguistic Relativity [Guest: Sallie Han]

Whorf, Benjamin Lee

1954 "The Relation of Habitual Thought and Behavior to Language," In S.I. Hayakawa, ed., *Language, Meaning, and Maturity: Selections from Etc. a Review of General Semantics, 1943-1953*, pp. 197-215. New York: Harper [Reprinted from *Language, Culture, and Personality: Essays in Memory of Edward Sapir* (Menasha, Wisconsin, 1941)].

Colapinto, John

2007 The Interpreter: Has a remote Amazonian tribe upended our understanding of language? *The New Yorker*, April 16, 2007, accessed online, http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2007/04/16/070416fa_fact_colapinto.

Pollie, Robert

2007 Tribe Helps Linguist Argue with Prevailing Theory. Weekend Edition, National Public Radio, April 8, 2007, radio broadcast accessed online, <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=9458681>.

Wed. Nov 19 No Class—AAA Annual Meetings

Mon. Nov 24 No Class—Thanksgiving

Wed. Nov 26 No Class—Thanksgiving

Mon. Dec 1 Anthropology isn't Geology (rocks don't talk back) [Guest: Renee/Tracy]

Billman, Brian R., Patricia M. Lambert, and Banks L. Leonard

2000 Cannibalism, Warfare, and Drought in the Mesa Verde Region During the Twelfth Century A.D. *American Antiquity* 65(1):145-178.

Kurt E. Dongoske, Debra L. Martin, and T.J. Ferguson

2000 Critique of the Claim of Cannibalism at Cowboy Wash. *American Antiquity* 65(1):179-190.

Draft of holism paper due (if you are submitting a draft).

Wed. Dec 3 *Representation in Museums* [Guest: Lisa Sorensen-Stahl]

Readings TBA

Mon. Dec 8 The Future of Anthropological Holism I

Nader, Laura

2001 Anthropology! Distinguished Lecture—2000. *American Anthropologist* 103(3):609-620.

Reaction Paper #4 due.

Choose from topics covered Nov. 3–Dec. 3.

Wed. Dec 10 **The Future of Anthropological Holism II** [*Guests: All available faculty*]

Calcagno, James M.

2003 Keeping Biological Anthropology in Anthropology, and Anthropology in Biology.
American Anthropologist 105(1):6-15.

Mon. Dec 15 **Final Exam Period: 11:00 am–1:30 pm**

Final holism paper due.